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**Know-Nothingism in Baltimore**

1854-1860

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## KNOW-NOTHINGISM IN BALTIMORE

1854-1860

Before describing the peculiar phase that Know-Nothingism assumed in Baltimore—it is well to state in a general way the origin of the movement and the conditions in Baltimore when nativism gained its first converts there.

During the Revolution the aid of volunteers from abroad was welcomed and that of all aliens who had settled here, whilst productive of some bickering was greatly desired. We have nothing to show that during the first decade of our country's history, there was any ill-will manifested towards the presence of foreigners, or objections even to their holding office. The nation was young and the country was only too anxious to increase in population and settlements. The first traces of unfriendliness to foreigners occurred during the hostilities between England and France and led up to the odious "Alien and Sedition Acts" of 1798, passed by a Federalist Congress and signed by a Federalist President. This gave the Democratic party that control over the immigrant which it has never since shown signs of relaxing. Though these laws brought about the downfall of the Federalist party, adversity taught it no lesson, for long after when it was an insignificant faction confined to the New England States, the Hartford Convention composed of Federalists, emphasized the previous position of the party by calling for stricter naturalization laws.

The idea of exclusion—sometimes latent, sometimes active—has been present at all times with all nations. There has always and everywhere existed, to put it mildly, an attitude towards the "Barbarian," the Stranger, the Gentile, the Outlander.

For two decades after the War of 1812, there does not appear to have been any public pronouncement against foreigners. There was no organized opposition until the formation, at New York in 1835, of the first Native American party. The interval had been a period of recuperation, of growth and as it was latterly called, the "Era of Good Will." There grew up, however, opposition to the new constituent in American public life of which conspicuous exponents were the followers of Andrew Jack-

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son, whose support was in no small measure drawn from the "foreign element" which had begun to make itself felt in the larger cities. The object of this new party was to wrest the city offices from the hands of immigrants, of whom the Tammany Society, no longer composed, as in the days of Burr, of small traders, then to a large extent consisted. This party met its death before the mayoralty election in 1837. But it did not take long for the nativist creed to spread elsewhere. From New York it passed quickly through the chain of little towns connecting Philadelphia with the metropolis. The Quaker City was not unprepared for its reception. Religious feeling was at a high pitch. Catholics were always very numerous in Philadelphia. St. Joseph's in that city was at one time the only Catholic Church in which mass was publicly celebrated in the Colonies. Irish Catholics and the nativist societies had frequent encounters, perpetrated a number of outrages upon one another, and provoked riots in which much property (including two Catholic Churches) was destroyed, and the peace of the city seriously endangered.

In 1843 with the aid of the foreign population the Democrats, having carried the City of New York, followed the orthodox methods of the day by rewarding their immigrant supporters, much to the dissatisfaction of the descendants of the fathers who had served the party well. The malcontents formed what for the time might be termed a reform organization. They called it the American Republican party, but subsequently (1845) changed the name to Native American party. In the city elections of 1844 it achieved success, but by 1847 the party had disappeared the way of many so-called reform organizations.

From this party proceeded the first wave of nativism that reached Baltimore. No doubt there were always in that city a number of individuals holding principles embraced by the several native American societies and parties, but hitherto there had been no organization. That want was soon filled. Nativism was publicly adopted by the *Baltimore Clipper* when on November 5th, 1844, it announced that in the future it would support the American Republican party,—a proclamation which we are told, was hailed with joy by many citizens of Baltimore and of the adjacent counties. The work of organizing proceeded rapidly. Meetings were held, clubs formed, tracts distributed,

and on March 13th of the next year an address announcing the objects of this party was issued. Amongst these were, correction of abuses generally, suppression of election frauds, banishment of foreign influences and spreading of American feeling and interests. The strength of the party was tested in the succeeding election. Duncan, whom they nominated to represent the fourth district in Congress received 1147 votes against Giles (Democrat) 5804 and Kennedy (Whig) 4962.

Out of the movement of 1844 arose a secret society known as the Order of the United Americans. This body was never known to have taken any more active part in politics than that of supporting such of its members as appeared in the field. It did not rise to the dignity of what to-day would be called a "Bloc." It probably was never anything more serious than any one of the many mutual benefit societies of our own day. Historically, however, it becomes important, for it serves to bridge over the gap that existed just prior to the birth of its powerful and dangerous secret successor.

For a few years the animosity against aliens was suffered to slumber. Apparently it had died out. But in 1852 an oath-bound secret society sprang up. It was known by various names,—“Sons of the Sires,” “Order of the Star Spangled Banner,” and others more or less fantastic. What the real name of the organization was and what its purposes, were things of which the rank and file were for a long time allowed to remain in absolute ignorance. To repeated inquiries there was the ever-ready and mysterious reply, “I know nothing,” whence the nickname derisively applied to the party. The professed *raisons d’être* of the new party were, the rapid growth of the Catholic Church in America, and the aggressiveness of its powerful and popular head, Archbishop Hughes; the great influx during 1848, 1849 and 1850 of immigrants, some flying from destitution and famine, others forced to seek refuge from unsuccessful revolutionary movements abroad; the active part that foreigners took in politics, their insatiable greed for spoils, their free thought and socialism. For some time this secret society refrained from sending a ticket into the field, contenting itself with the electoral proscription of all Catholics and all immigrants. Naturally this method of throwing a large vote now with the Whigs, now with



the Democrats caused a great deal of confusion and quite unsettled all political calculations. It withdrew local politics from the ward-worker's category of exact sciences.

The ability of this unknown quantity to elect or defeat such candidates as it pleased greatly increased its confidence in itself and as a matter of course it did not take long before the Know-Nothings aspired to act together as a political party with a definite platform and with candidates of their own. Their first attempts were made and their first successes gained in their strongholds, Philadelphia, New Orleans and Baltimore.

In Baltimore Know-Nothingism found a fertile soil where the memory of the 1844 nativist movement still clung. In 1839 the anti-Catholic sentiments of a portion of the people of that city led to an attack upon the Carmelite convent, and to any number of outrages of more or less note. An atmosphere of lawlessness which was always most invigorating to nativist workers had developed to an alarming extent. True, according to Niles, a riotous spirit had spread all over the country, which was all the more remarkable because it did not follow upon the last war with England, but twenty years after and succeeding a period of external peace and internal prosperity.

I quote from Niles' Register (Sept. 5, 1835) :

During the last and present week we have cut out and laid aside more than *five hundred* articles relating to various *excitements* now acting on the people of the United States public and private. *Society seems everywhere unhinged* and the demon of blood and slaughter has been let loose upon us. We have the slave question in many different forms, including the proceedings of *kidnappers* and *man-stealers* and others belonging to the free negroes, the proscription and prosecution of gamblers; with mobs growing out of *local matters*—a great collection of acts of violence of a *private* or *personal* nature ending in death; and regret to believe also that an awful political outcry is about to be raised to rally the poor against the rich! We have executions and murders and riots to the utmost limits of the Union! The character of our countrymen seems suddenly changed and thousands interpret the law in their own way—sometimes in one case one way and in another, another way, guided apparently only by their own will.

Just when Baltimore gained the name "mob-town" is not clear. The attack upon the Massachusetts regiment at the beginning of the Civil War was the dramatic culmination of a riotous spirit that for a long period had been remarked.

Much of the lawlessness was due to the lack of proper organization, the need of adequate powers and forces. The government of the city was but slightly superior to that of the average county of to-day. The State of Maryland had no militia whatsoever, the city of Baltimore had but a few volunteer companies. Its police were under the nominal superintendence of the high constable, but under the actual control of the mayor; and the latter was so overburdened with other cares that with the best of will he could not direct them. The force was small. The system of making compulsory rounds, or beats had not been introduced. Patrolmen spent their time on duty in the little watch-boxes that were scattered throughout the town. There they would await occurrences that called for their services, and thither outraged citizens had to rush when in search of help. Many were the times when organized gangs of roughs made life within a watch-box unpleasant. Inadequacy of police protection made the carrying of fire-arms universal. "One," so wrote Dr. William Hand Browne, the Archivist of Maryland, "would as soon have thought of going out at night without his hat as without his revolver." The frequency with which larger fire-arms were displayed is surprising, and we read with amazement of the facility with which rioters brought cannon to bear upon objective points.

The police and fire alarm telegraph had not been invented. A regularly organized fire department did not exist, but its place was inadequately filled by a superfluity of volunteer companies, whose rivalry, originally friendly, led every now and then to armed encounters, if not to bloody riots. As conflagrations in the ordinary course of events did not occur with sufficient frequency to satisfy disorderly instincts, resort was had by the more mischievous and malicious to false alarms, and even to incendiarianism.

Election rows were the order of the day. There were fierce encounters during the exciting Harrison-Van Buren contest. There were desperate bank riots in the year 1835, in which the



houses of Reverdy Johnson and Nevitt Steele—both leaders of the Maryland bar, Johnson a man of national reputation—were sacked, and their valuable libraries put to the torch. The love of disorder for its own sake had reached a very high pitch.

From this recital it will be seen that Know-Nothingism found a fertile soil in Baltimore. Besides lawlessness and the lack of means to counteract it, every department of the city government was rife with corruption. Elections were carried on in the most fraudulent high-handed and outrageous manner. The votes were taken by wards and not as now by precincts of not more than five hundred voters. It was customary for judges of election to locate the polls near to one another for the convenience of such voters as cared to exercise the elective franchise in more than one ward. Not infrequently unpleasant if not dangerous localities were selected. Frauds in registering and in polling and in the count were then practiced on a colossal scale.

Lest they might fall into the hands of wily managers of the opposite party, an ingenious practice had sprung up, of seizing the intemperate voters of one's own party just a few days before, and taking charge of them over, election. About 1850 this practice underwent a gradual change. Gangs of roughs of all parties ranged the streets to capture the intemperate of whatever politics, whether voters or not, later on whether intoxicated or not, and "coop" them up, as the expression went, until the day of election when they were voted in squads at the various polls of the city. These press-gangs, exercised no discrimination whatsoever but seized whomsoever they could find, until finally the best citizens were in danger of being "cooped." Mayor Jerome was at one time indebted only to the fleetness of his horse for his escape. Woodberry, in his life of Edgar Allen Poe, relates that in October, 1849, Poe dined with military friends, became intoxicated, was captured by politicians and then voted at several polling places. All these efficient means Know-Nothingism found on its advent. It invented nothing but made thorough use of all the materials that were at its disposal, and carried that use to the highest potentialities.

The nativist secret societies were just the thing which the large number of rowdies needed. They could now plan and commit their outrages under the cover of a secret order, whilst the plane of their operations was raised,—they were "in politics."

The character of the first so-called "American" clubs in Baltimore varied. That some contained refined and educated people cannot be doubted. To these probably belonged those who had taken part in the movements of the earlier American party. The influence of clubs made up of disaffected spoils-seeking factions of the Whigs was not good, whilst those containing the organized rowdy element,—and these were the most numerous—were bad beyond description.

The first Know-Nothing mass meeting was held in Baltimore August 18, 1853, in Monument Square and was attended by about five thousand persons. It was addressed entirely by Philadelphians. The principles advocated were that Americans should rule America, the public schools should continue to be maintained upon the same lines, restrictions should be placed upon immigration, resistance should be made to the curtailment of the freedom of speech, to a union of Church and State, to the formation of secret military or political organizations of foreigners of one religious faith. The only proposition that deserves serious consideration was the restriction of immigration. As to the other demands, liberty of speech stood in no danger of limitation; there was at that time not nearly as much of a chance of union between Church and State as between State and saloon; the rule of America by Americans was not threatened. There was some talk of abolishing the Bible in the schools and of giving Catholics separate schools, but this amounted to very little outside of New York. Even there with Seward ever favoring the Catholic and the naturalized vote, and with his speeches advocating their demands, no changes were introduced into the schools. The last demand—suppression of secret political societies—is a paradoxical one coming as it did from a secret organization, but was not at all out of harmony with nativist logic.

At the outset, as in other cities, the Know-Nothings did not at first put out a ticket, but supported the Whigs who had not recovered from the severe defeat of the previous year. In 1854, however, they nominated a complete municipal ticket. They had at the start but little hope of success, but by creating an intense feeling against Roman Catholics they very nearly succeeded in making a "clean sweep." Hinks, their candidate was elected mayor over Thomas (Democratic). The first branch of



the Council contained fourteen Know-Nothings to six Democrats, whilst the second stood eight to two. There were no Whig candidates. That party simply returned the favors it had been receiving from the Know-Nothings by voting the latter's ticket.

The first year's administration of the city by the American party did not call forth hostile criticism, nor is it entitled to a great amount of praise. The previous council had passed an ordinance for the creation of an efficient corps of police, which Mayor Hollins had vetoed, probably on account of the patronage which would have been at the disposal of the incoming mayor. How much trouble could have been averted had Hollins performed his duty the sequel will show. The *Sun*, or to use local parlance, the *Sunpaper*, was very zealous in making friendly suggestions to the party in power. Amongst other things it requested the administration to finish what the Democrats had left undone, namely, to provide the city with a better police system. This suggestion passed unheeded.

Whilst the municipal election gave Know-Nothingism some prestige, it was not sufficient to establish it as a controlling force in the political field. The State election held in November 1854 resulted in the choice of Ligon, Democratic, by a large majority over Bowie the Whig candidate supported by the "American" vote, with the Legislature, which consisted in Senate of fourteen Whigs and "Americans" to eight Democrats and in the House of Delegates of thirty-nine Whigs and "Americans" to thirty-one Democrats. In Baltimore the sentiment that Americans should rule America as interpreted by the Know-Nothing organization did not seem any too deep-rooted, for at the municipal election of the succeeding year (1855) the Democrats regained a majority (12-8) in the first branch of the Council to the great surprise of the Know-Nothings, who immediately prepared to retrieve their loss in the state and congressional elections of the succeeding month. In these the nativist ticket was successful at all points. The Legislature elected was composed of, Senate, eight Know-Nothings, two Democrats and one Unionist, House, fifty-five Know-Things, two Democrats and eight Unionists. The immense preponderance of the Know-Nothing party in the Legislature was just cause for alarm to the Democratic party. The possession of a "border" State by a party thought to

be in alliance with the Republicans of the West, could not fail to strike terror into the heart of the Democracy. Northern writers have not infrequently denounced the Know-Nothing party as an instance of "organized hypocrisy"—a creature of the slave-holding South intended to divert the attention of the North by dividing it upon questions inconsequential and irrelevant; but at the South the popular feeling against this party was just as bitter and for the same reasons but proceeding from a precisely opposite position. Henry Wise of Virginia, in his celebrated letter against Know-Nothingism "arraigns" that party for the anti-slavery principles of many of its leaders. The same charges are made against it with great vigor in his life of Tyler. After berating it for its abolitionism, unitarianism and bigotry, he concludes:

It was the most impious and unprincipled affiliation by bad means for bad ends which ever seized upon large masses of men of every opinion and party, and swayed them for a brief period blindly, as if by a Vehmgericht!

Both Free Soil and Slavery parties maintained false hypotheses in respect of the Know-Nothing party. It may be truthfully described as a blind grouping around one standard of a great many heterogeneous elements in search of a real,—but trying to avoid the inevitable—issue.

In 1855 the Know-Nothing party was successful in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Maryland, Kentucky and California, and suffered but slight defeats in Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana and Texas. When the extension of slavery was rapidly becoming the all-absorbing question, it required no political seer to foretell that with its rickety and disjointed platform it could not much longer attract the attention and obtain the votes of its one-time supporters. It was unable to suppress the slavery question in its own conventions. It contained from its inception a Northern and Southern wing. Had its life been of longer duration, it would have split in two upon the rock of slavery. Greely in an article in the *Tribune Almanac* after describing the rise and progress of the party observes:



"But it would seem as utterly devoid of elements of persistence and coherence as an anti-cholera or an anti-potato-rot party would be. They will probably put forward a presidential ticket next time and then disappear,"

and Greely's prophecy so far as national politics was concerned was verified.

The turbulence and lawlessness, the suspiciousness and hatred engendered by the secret proceedings of the Order had by this time thoroughly aroused all the opposition elements. Denunciation from pulpit, platform and press was frequent. The courts and the legislature had not yet been appealed to. At a few murder trials in Virginia, the prosecution had vainly tried to wring from witnesses the secrets and aims of the society. Witnesses objecting to answer the questions designed to reveal these were sustained in their refusals by the court. But the party now met with open and public attack. The governor of Maryland in his annual message alluded to the existence of secret political societies whose aims and the means which they employed in their attainment were nothing short of conspiracy. He called for an investigation and for legislation designed to correct the evil. The Legislature promptly responded by the appointment of a committee of five to whom was referred the part of the message dealing with secret political societies. The committee was ordered to report: (1) whether any secret political society existed in the State (2) whether any political society was known to encourage purposes tending to the subversion of the principles of government, (3) whether these societies had brought religious issues into the field of politics, (4) the character and import of the secrets of these societies, (5) remedial legislation and measures of restraint.

There was but one question upon which the committee was unanimous,—that the American party of the Philadelphia platform of June 1855 was the subject of the Governor's attack. By a distinct vote it was resolved to deny themselves the right conferred upon them by the Legislature of summoning witnesses and calling for papers descriptive of the principles, purposes and objects of the Know-Nothing party, resolving that it was an insult to the intelligence of that large part of the people which

had chosen "Americans" for its representatives, and that it was unnecessary because the people of Maryland in the majesty of their power

"had furnished the Legislature with abundant testimony of the purity of the Know-Nothing principles by the large and respectable representation in the majority in both the Senate and the House of Delegates."

The majority report failed to touch the point at issue more than once. To what the Governor termed a conspiracy for a number of voters to conspire against Roman Catholics and adoptive citizens they replied that

"\* \* \* the privacy of the ballot is guarded by law expressly that each voter may determine his own choice \* \* and that no man may question the grounds of such vote or make it the subject of odious or offensive comment before the public. \* \* Every citizen has a right \* \* of judgment upon the religious or political opinions no less than upon the character and capacity of anyone who is submitted to \* \* his vote. \* \* The spirit of Republican freedom \* \* secures him inviolable immunity from all questions of his motive."

The position of the majority upon the technical constitutional question of the secrecy of the ballot was sound. The minority had intended summoning nineteen witnesses from Baltimore. Nine of these were at one time members of, some having reached a very high degree in, the Know-Nothing Order. Prevented by the majority they presented a minority report containing much of the desired information. This report contains all that we know about the secret workings of the Order. In it can be found its constitution, those of the individual societies, the passwords, countersigns, oaths, degrees, initiation ceremonial and other ritual. On the whole in this toggery, Know-Nothingism can hardly be said to have differed from many large secret benefit societies of the day. The oath of the first degree alone deserves mention. It shows what enormous control the Know-Nothing boss could with very little effort exert over the timid subservient lodge member to whom it had once been administered. The candidate bound himself in all things to submit to the will of the majority, although that will may conflict with his



personal inclinations; never to vote for a Roman Catholic; to prefer Know-Nothings of the third degree to all others, and members to outsiders, and obligated himself to follow the same rules in dispensing patronage whenever that should be in his gift.

The American party was not again heard from until its national convention in Philadelphia, February 22, 1856. Always desirous of creating patriotic feeling it combined its appearances in public with some important event in American history. It made a point of observing every national event as a part of its ritual, always publicly and in a theatrical manner so designed for political effect. The first party platform was adopted on the anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill. The first national convention met on the birthday of the Father of His Country, whom they sought to associate with themselves by appropriating the slogan attributed to him, "Put none but Americans on guard tonight."

At this convention, as a bid for the Whig vote, Millard Fillmore was nominated for the presidency, and Andrew Jackson Donelson of Tennessee for the vice-presidency. The platform contained the stereotyped Know-Nothing demands, and a well-seasoned plank condemning the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Subsequently (Sept. 17) a convention of "Old Line Whigs" met at Baltimore and accepted the nominees of the Know-Nothing party but specifically declined to endorse any of its peculiar tenets.

There can be no doubt that the Know-Nothing leaders had formed great hopes of success. It did seem at the beginning of the canvass as though there were a chance of throwing the election into the House of Representatives. The Republican ticket, it was argued, was sure to carry the West, the Know-Nothings had been victorious in the Eastern and the Middle States and almost so in many of the Southern, in the elections of 1855. The Democratic party was expected to poll the highest popular vote, but despite that might be defeated. In the event of the election going to the House, there could be no mistake as to the probable result, the Democracy would be turned out of power; but the Know-Nothing party did not anticipate the complete defeat that it met at the November elections.

Meanwhile Baltimore's local "Fourth of July," the Twelfth of September, was approaching. Great preparations were made for the proper celebration of the day, but by none more so than by that bigoted minority that sought to monopolize for itself the name American. Speeches and other stimulants of "American" patriotism were indulged in, perhaps the latter to an unfortunate extent, as the result would seem to show. Three Know-Nothing clubs, the notorious Rip Raps and Plug Uglies, and another bearing the aboriginal American name "Wompanoag" were passing Federal Hill when the trouble began, shots rang out and a riot ensued in which a tavern was sacked, two persons killed and twenty seriously wounded. This outbreak created quite a sensation, and the news of it quickly spread throughout the country. The New York and Philadelphia papers appeared the next day with huge headlines proclaiming anarchic conditions in Baltimore. There can be but little doubt that this bit of lawlessness was turned to good account politically and contributed to sway not a few undecided minds.

Before the municipal elections of October, the city had quieted down, and the matter was almost forgotten. But these political organizations had not forgotten their first taste of riot. It took very little provocation for the "Rip Raps" to attack the New Market Fire Company in the Lexington Market. The two bodies faced one another and fought desperately firing in regular platoons, but the experience and superior training of the "Rip Raps" soon began to tell. The fire laddies were driven from the market, pursued in various directions, and their fire house entered and sacked. There were a number of minor disturbances elsewhere. The day closed with the election of Thomas Swann the Know-Nothing candidate over Wright, Democratic, with thirteen members out of twenty of the first branch of the council Know-Nothings, and the second branch evenly divided. The state and national elections took place on the fourth of November. It was soon quite apparent that a fair vote could not be polled. Armed resistance was met with everywhere, the lot of the naturalized voter being the sorriest. Fights and brawls occurred throughout the city and at all times throughout the day. The most serious collisions took place in the second, fourth, sixth and eighth wards which for decades thereafter remained the



regions of greatest disorder. In the sixth ward an encounter with the police occurred in which the mob used a few small cannon. Reinforcements arriving from the seventh ward rendered the police powerless to make any arrests, though they succeeded in capturing the cannon. In the second ward the Democrats drove the Know-Nothings from the polls and followed them up High Street. The Know-Nothings of the fourth ward hearing of this came to their party's aid but were also repulsed. More Know-Nothings came running in and at last succeeded in routing the Democrats who were pursued far out of the ward. Eight persons were killed and more than fifty wounded. The victorious rowdies carried the day. Know-Nothingism swept every ward in the city. The city vote for president stood, Fillmore 16,900, Buchanan 9,871, Fremont 214. Maryland was the only State that gave its electoral vote to the Know-Nothing candidate. The party had been crushed in every other State of the Union, by the Democracy in some, by advancing Republicanism in others.

A year passed. Some much needed reforms had been introduced. The police had been reorganized. On the whole from a business point of view Swann made a capable mayor, but he had not the ability to deal with politicians, particularly where they had the power that proceeds from violence. He was an excellent business man. At one time president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, his was the material from which mayors should be selected. The city finances had been managed most efficiently. There was very little hostile criticism of his administration. No one could hold him responsible for the excesses to which his party had gone in the previous election, and had not the Democrats been equally guilty? Long before the days of Know-Nothingism the "Empire" and other Democratic clubs had acted quite as outrageously as the "Rip Raps," "Plug Uglies," "Tigers," "Blood Tubs" and various other Nativist clubs of like uneuphemistic names.

In his first message to the city council Swann alluded to the increase of lawlessness, deprecated the use of force and the carrying of arms and laid the blame for all the outrages upon the courts,

"the power of the city police terminates with the arrest of the party or parties offending against the law."

A peaceful election was expected that Autumn. Even the naturalized voter thought that he might now deposit his vote unharmed, and have it counted without any fraudulent manipulation. Party rancor and animosity had greatly fallen off. The *Baltimore Sun* predicted, as a result and from the more efficient police (created by an ordinance passed the first of the year), a quiet day, and added that politicians rarely care very much about city councils, a fallacy which the *Sun* has since had time to outlive.

How hopelessly all parties were wrong, was made clear by the events of the day. Violence was everywhere rampant. Slugs, knives, pistols, were to be seen in the hands of all partisans. Rows, fights, brawls took place at almost every street corner. Incendaries set fire to houses whilst their fellow-gangsters sacked them. A riot took place in the eighth ward between Know-Nothings and Democrats, provoked probably by one as much as by the other, neither party having just cause. Cannon were brought to bear from Jackson Hall, the Democratic quarters, upon the Know-Nothings, and Jourdan, a police sergeant, was shot. Before many polling places were placed tubs of bloody water into which the unhappy German or Irish voter was plunged. One of the Know-Nothing clubs took its name "Blood Tubs" from this kind of outrage. Kicks and cuffs were of course not wanting and these gory apparitions running through the streets with crowds at their heels were sufficient in themselves to excite terror in the hearts of others. Persons who had no intention of hazarding their lives in order to deposit their votes were abused, attacked and maltreated. Large crowds were formed around all the polls and it was well-nigh impossible for the Democratic (certainly for the naturalized) voter to get to the window. Illegal votes were received by the thousands. They would be passed over the heads of the crowd and the judges were told they came from parties in an omnibus who were unable to reach the window. The polls were advertised to be at the centres of wards but the judges took it upon themselves to remove them to outskirts (in close proximity to one another for the convenience of the clubs). Such was the notorious character of the day that many candidates resigned by noon and even election judges refused to serve. The result, which the *Baltimore*



*American*, never much in sympathy with the Democratic party, depicted as "a mere mockery of the elective franchise," was the capture by the Know-Nothings of every ward in the city but the eighth, the stronghold of the Irish. The vote in the city election stood Know-Nothings 11,898, Democratic 2,792, over against 16,900 cast the previous year for Fillmore and 9,871 for Buchanan. Thus there was a decrease of 12,081 votes of which 5,002 were Know-Nothing and 7,079 Democratic. The respectable element of even the Know-Nothing party were beginning to stay at home. Matters had now gone too far. Election frauds, rows and riots had taken place all over the country, in fact they seemed an indispensable condition of republican and representative institutions. In many cases they may have been successful in putting into office the choice of the minority, but they had never helped in the least to form public opinion. Baltimore had climbed into an unenviable position. Its bad reputation had spread abroad. James Hodges in an address to a reform mass meeting in 1859 said that a manufacturer in some obscure English town on learning that Hodges came from Baltimore exclaimed, "Why that's the place the roughs shoot people down in the streets." The prosperity of the city showed signs of falling off. The better organized police force had been neither able nor willing to cope with the disorder. It was high time that some superior authority intervened. That higher authority was willing; what is more, good citizens implored intervention, but as the leader in the State of the opposing party his position was one of great responsibility and peculiar delicacy. Not to interfere would be to avoid a duty in order to escape abuse or at least loss of popularity, whilst on the other hand to intervene would lay him open to slander, vilification and misconstruction of motive. Governor Ligon courageously communicated the whole matter to the legislature in his message the next year. Amongst other things he said:

"At the Municipal election held in Baltimore in 1856 an organized force was made apparent at the polls which in its direct influence was immediately felt by naturalized citizens \* \* \*

In the course of the day bloody and destructive riots took place and the subsequent records comprehended a

list of killed and wounded truly appalling. The city was temporarily outlawed by its own fury, and it is beyond all question with me that could the executive authority have commanded military power at the moment of the emergency it would have been my duty then to have interposed and overwhelmed a lawless demonstration clearly defiant of the municipal police. As the time approached for the presidential election in November 1856 apprehension generally prevailed that a recurrence of similar scenes was inevitable. \* \* \*

On the eve of the presidential election I proceeded to Baltimore and sought an interview with the Mayor of the city, in the hope of such co-operation of influences and moral and material power as would ensure the peace of the city, prevent bloodshed and secure to every citizen without respect to party the exercise of his political rights. My overtures were repulsed with cold civility and I was thrown upon my personal and official responsibility before an important and respectable community for the initiative in a measure which the exigency of the times demanded and the executive of the city was indisposed to adopt. \* \* \*

A year glided away and with the fall of 1857 the political elements were again stirred for the election contests of the season. In the meantime the civil condition of the city had become more sensibly demoralized. The press without distinction of party was teeming with every day report of wrong, outrage, violent encounters of partisans, desperate assaults and homicides. \* \* \*

Since the election of the preceding year a new and enlarged organization of the city police had been made and I was not without hopes that it would exert a conservative force on the occasion. I was assured by numerous gentlemen of the city that they expected nothing of the sort and they referred to the daily record of violence as abundant proof of its inefficiency to subdue even preliminary disorder. \* \* \*

He therefore determined to go to the city there to use persuasion and if necessary, his constitutional authority in favor of law and order. He continues:

"Immediately upon my arrival I addressed the Mayor of the city, invited his counsel and co-operation in devising and putting into practical effect means adequate to the impending emergency. Again my overtures were re-



pulsed and this time the executive authority of the State coolly and gratuitously disputed."

The Mayor had replied to the governor that he had already made sufficient arrangements, and that he did not propose to recognize any joint administration in the affairs of the city.

"The object which I had in view \* \* \* would not admit of delay incident to an empty controversy about well-established constitutional authority."

Accordingly on the 29th of October he issued a proclamation to the traditional good citizens setting forth that inasmuch as the municipal authorities were unable to enforce the laws or to secure a fair and honest election, he felt it his duty to interpose, that troops would be on hand to protect the rights of all the people, that all good citizens should remain within the ward of their residence, thereby ensuring a better enforcement of the laws and a maintenance of order and quiet. At the same time orders were issued to Major-General Steuart to keep his command in readiness, and to Major-General Smith to enroll without delay six regiments of six hundred men each. It is very doubtful whether these troops would have contributed anything to quiet proceedings; in fact the reverse might have been anticipated especially in view of the antagonism between mayor and governor. There might have been a conflict of authority accidental or carefully plotted. Then the edifying spectacle would have been seen of the police aided by the Know-Nothing clubs fighting the state forces and the Democrats. Nothing short of anarchy would have ensued. Calmer minds saw the danger and the press gave expression to it. In New York, Philadelphia and elsewhere the impression had been received that the governor had proclaimed the City of Baltimore under martial law, which, of course, was far from the case. The Know-Nothing papers of the city and state took up the charge thus reflected from afar and busied themselves disseminating it at home.

"Misrepresentation and abuse of the press (the governor adds) and the diffusion of erroneous sentiments respecting the executive authority had an effect in keeping away many who were expected to serve."

On the first of November the mayor and a number of citizens represented to the governor that special extraordinary arrangements had been made to avoid a recurrence of the disorder of the previous elections and demanded that he withdraw his proclamation, but this demand met with a firm refusal, for Ligon was, unwilling to concede the point at issue because, in case of need, he wanted some force with which to meet the emergency. Nevertheless he consented to announce that in view of the sufficiency of the arrangements of the mayor he did not contemplate the use of the military force which he had ordered to be enrolled and organized.

In respect to the constitutional question, the mayor had a plausible case, but that is all. The soundness of the governor's position was sustained by the most eminent legal talent of the state such as Reverdy Johnson, Severn Teackle Wallis, J. V. L. McMahon, G. W. Brown, F. W. Brune, Jr., I. Nevitt Steele and others. The constitution of the state made the governor commander-in-chief of all the land and naval forces of the state, with power to call out the militia "to repel invasions, suppress insurrections and enforce the execution of laws," but it prohibited him from taking command in person without legislative consent. The constitution also required him to see that "the laws be faithfully executed." The mayor objected to the governor's invading the privileges of a chartered city; calling out troops before there was an actual invasion or insurrection; taking command in person without the legislature's consent; summoning troops unrecognized by the State. In these days the objections of Swann must seem the veriest pettifogging, for a city charter is not the grant of government independent of the state but substantially mere administrative separation from that of the county, that the power of a governor to have troops in readiness to meet a city mob is just as ample as to quell a county insurrection. The governor had sufficient grounds to fear that the November elections would be conducted in defiance of law and it fell within his duty to provide and have in readiness the means for executing the laws. There was considerable difference of opinion as to whether calling out the militia did not constitute taking command in person, though to-day this would seem rather a strained construction. What the framers of the Maryland constitution probably had in mind in using the expression "taking command



in person" was neglecting the ordinary duties of the executive by going into the field at the head of the troops. The objection to volunteer forces—a *posse not comitatus* but of the state was without merit, since as the state possessed no regularly enrolled militia, these few volunteer corps might well have been considered militia within the meaning of the constitution.

A policeman has the right to order citizens to aid him in executing the law; the sheriff has the same power. It would seem rather paradoxical if the chief executive officer did not possess an equal power to request or to order the aid of citizens and to use that aid when proffered. The irregular character is taken from voluntary defenders, when they are regularly employed by one of the responsible officers of the State.

The State of Maryland was at this time ill-supplied not only with troops but with arms and ammunitions. In this crisis Governor Ligon was obliged to request of the Governor of Virginia the loan of two thousand stand of arms. The defenceless condition of the state was the subject of serious comment on the part of the adjutant-general in his report to the governor at the end of this year, and he advised the creation of a regular militia.

The mayor's proclamation for the ensuing election commanded the police to carry out every order given by judges of election, to keep the polls clear, arrest all disorderly or intoxicated persons, seize all fire-arms exhibited at the polls, detain all carriages containing riotous persons and in case of serious disorder to dispatch messengers to the mayor's office. Citizens were requested to report all delinquencies on the part of the police. Omnibuses were to be in readiness at the central station to convey adequate forces to any part of the city. The police were to close all liquor stores. Ten special policemen were to be assigned to each ward in addition to the regular force. It was thought these arrangements would be carried out in good faith, and on persuasion of Messrs. Johnson, Howard, Wallis and others who represented the law-abiding part of the community, the governor consented to issue a proclamation abandoning any determination to use the military.

Election day came. The Baltimore *Clipper*, a Know-Nothing organ, announced editorially that no foreigner who had not been naturalized by the federal courts would be allowed to vote.

There were very few open outbreaks but the covert violence and intimidation practiced was enormous. The members of the Know-Nothing clubs wore, strapped around their knees, very fine delicate awls, which, besides making it impossible to tell with certainty who was the offender, were far more efficacious than clumsy knives which in previous election encounters they had been wont to use. The Know-Nothing tickets bore a red stripe plainly visible through the ballot. Persons approaching the polls without such tickets were at first asked to accept them, that failing, they were threatened and if the voter still insisted upon his rights as an American citizen, the crowd would close around him and inflict a number of awl-wounds in his unsuspecting legs and back. There were, of course, some voters for whom even the rowdies had respect. Wallis was told by one of the chief bullies that the Know-Nothings had no objection to his or Brown's voting, 'for they were gentlemen.' Vansant was never molested. During one election he went up to the polls with his son who not being so well known was forced aside by the crowd, whereupon someone who knew him called out "let Mr. Vansant's son come up and vote." A very small vote was polled. No doubt this was due to the disgraceful proceedings of the municipal election and to the intimidation practiced all the week as well as on the day of the state and national election, though it was said that the Germans stayed home because of their not receiving a part of the customs house spoils. The Know-Nothing ticket was completely successful in Baltimore, Messrs. Harris and Davis being elected to Congress. Hicks was elected governor and the legislature for the ensuing term was made up of Senate: fifteen Know-Nothings to seven Democrats. House of Delegates: forty-two Know-Nothings to thirty-one Democrats. This Legislature passed a resolution of censure of the governor declaring in the usual stereotyped form for the sanctity of the ballot and the purity of elections, charging that his assertions that "Baltimore was on the verge of anarchy on the eve of the last election, that voters were excluded from the polls and daring frauds everywhere committed, that these wrongs are unparalleled but in Baltimore," were unsustained by the evidence and a libel upon the people of the city. His action was formally declared to be ill-advised, reckless, unnecessary and dangerous; his



interposition illegal and his order that no man should leave his ward unless ordered by competent authority of law, "a piece of unparalleled despotism."

Hicks, the new governor, evidently had the fate of his predecessor in mind, for in his inaugural he promised that he would never under any circumstances call out the militia on the eve of an election. Further on he repeated exactly what Mayor Swann said in his message of that year that the disorders were due more to the want of proper laws than to the unwillingness of those in authority to enforce them.

An attempt was made to overcome the results of terrorism by contesting the congressional elections. Brooks served a notice upon Henry Winter Davis, and William Pinkney Whyte, one upon Harris. A large amount of testimony was taken but the contestants were unsuccessful.

The same distressing round of outbreaks and outrages linked the elections of 1857 with those of 1858. The only one of any importance was the attack upon the building of the "Deutsche Correspondent." The municipal election was drawing near and numerous independent candidates were cropping up. Swann received the Know-Nothing nomination. The *Baltimore Sun* never for a moment believing the mayor to be responsible for the outrages of his supporters, admitted the uselessness and, in fact, danger, of opposition to the dictatorship of the minority. It therefore deprecated the nomination of any rival candidates, expressed itself perfectly willing to support Swann and trusted implicitly in his declarations of desire to reform the abuses that were warping the city's life. The pusillanimous tone of the *Sun* was amazing though certainly not illogical. Some over-zealous persons pushed for the office the name of A. P. Shutt. Though his chances were far from strong, he consented nevertheless to become a candidate. The 13th of October came, but before noon he announced:

"It being clearly manifest that a deliberate purpose actuates the mayor of this city to countenance the general combination which now prevails between his police and the armed bands of lawless men who have since the opening of the ballot-boxes held possession of the polls \* \* \* I feel it my duty to \* \* \* withdraw my name as candidate for Mayor."

This proclamation is of itself a sufficient commentary upon the proceedings of the day. It would be wearisome to recount all the disgraceful doings of the Rip Raps, Plug Uglies, Eubolts, Tigers, Black Snakes, Blood Tubs, Rough Skins, Regulators, Ranters, Rattlers, Rosebuds, White Oaks, Black Oaks, Decatur, Washingtons, Thunderbolts, Eutaws, Little Fellows, Babes and others more or less notorious of the Know-Nothing clubs. Swann was re-elected by 24,008 votes to 4,858 for Shutt, of which 3,428 were cast in one ward, the Democratic stronghold. The Know-Nothing ticket for the City Council prevailed everywhere but in the eighth ward.

But the people of Baltimore had begun to tire of the rowdism that had so long held the city in terror, ruined its fair name and made itself felt in the falling off of business. The opposition to Know-Nothing domination which had manifested itself under various forms, democratic, anti-know-nothing, independent or citizens' party—now blossomed forth into full-blown reform party. It had passed through the evolutionary stages of most reform parties and while in adversity had undergone purification. There was no other organization to which the respectable people of Baltimore could look to save them from the anarchy of Know-Nothingism. In 1856 the Democratic party had taken the initiatory steps. The city convention requested the voters to give information and evidence relating to the election frauds and outrages. The legal questions involved, it announced, would be submitted to Messrs. J. V. L. McMahon and Reverdy Johnson. The leaders of the new opposition, the reform party, were such men as George William Brown, William Woodward, C. D. Hinks, G. M. Gill, James Hodges. A meeting was held on the first of November, and a circular issued, but otherwise nothing much was done until the Autumn of 1859 when a call was issued, —signed by more than fifteen hundred persons,—for a town-meeting to rescue the city from its "deplorable condition." The meeting took place September 8th in the "Square," as Monument Square was then called, was presided over by William Woodward and addressed by Messrs. Brown, Hodges and others. It was resolved to nominate reform candidates to all offices but those of congressman, to request the mayor to appoint unimpeachable election judges, to enroll two hundred order-loving



citizens as special constables for each ward, to give the judges and constables full power to act in cases of emergency and to order the closing of saloons. The call for the meeting provoked quite a sensation. Such was the desire to attend that tradesmen closed their shops at noon in order to give their employees an opportunity to be present. Reform sentiment had now become too strong to be restrained, and therefore the Know-Nothings, desirous of "pandering to the moral sense of the community" held an opposition meeting the next night which they also styled a reform meeting. "Reform within the party" was the remedy proposed, but the pretense was too shallow to enlist any enthusiasm. That same night (October 6th) two of its speakers were nominated to office by party conventions. The desire for reform was becoming epidemic. Even Stump the notorious judge of the Criminal Court to which Brown had alluded as "yonder cesspool of corruption" favored reform, said he was thoroughly in sympathy with the objects of the reform party, but thought the speakers were too severe upon him. He would not accept office again unless the pay were increased and the work reduced by one-half. He was getting up an address, which if no newspaper would publish, he intended to issue in pamphlet form, to show why justice is obstructed. Many concerned in the reform meeting, he charged, were the direct cause of the corruption. Notorious offenders who had gotten into the clutches of the law had their friends obtain signatures to petitions for pardon. How much that sounds like "alibis" of to-day!

The central committee conformably to the resolutions passed at the mass meeting communicated with the mayor. Swann replied that he was perfectly willing to commission any conservative, non-partisan citizens who would come forward. At the same time he published an address to the people of Baltimore in defense of his course. He deprecated the appointment of special police, because then fights instead of being between clubs would be between two opposing sets of police. He complained of the press for printing in full exaggerated accounts of crimes. He probably reasoned himself into a species of sincerity to justify the false position into which for so long a time he had complacently allowed himself to be drawn.

Swann's address seeming to imply a contradiction to his reply

to the committee, another letter was sent him. It contained in addition to what appeared in the first, objections to the judges of elections just appointed, twenty-nine of whom had served the previous year, and were for the most part the most undesirable men that could have been selected. The mayor repeated his assurances, expressed surprise that his nominations should be so severely criticised and desired legal proof of the charge that his appointees had received illegal votes. Seeing that it was useless to negotiate with the mayor, recourse was had to the sheriff but with no better success. The latter, while admitting his great powers, refused for reasons that he deemed satisfactory, to act but saying he would acquiesce in the mayor's arrangements. The mayor came forward with proposals similar to those of 1857. While the election preparations were being pushed, the trial took place of four roughs charged with creating a riot on a bay steamer bringing a number of colored people to the city. There were about a dozen in all who were concerned in the affair. They were known to one another by handkerchiefs worn around their necks. The name of a Know-Nothing club served as the signal and bullies went to work knocking down, robbing and stabbing, and there were also instances of the violation of colored women. The captain and crew of the "Express" were powerless. On reaching the city a few of the thugs were arrested. Considerable feeling was shown at the trial, the justice presiding going to the undignified length of descending from the bench to say in an audible whisper to a *Sun* reporter that he wished they had thrown the captain overboard for taking colored folks aboard. The jury found a verdict of guilty against three of the ruffians, and these,—such still was the hold that the criminal Know-Nothings' organization had upon the courts,—were punished only with a *fine of fifty cents* and two days imprisonment each.

Election day came and went marked by an unlimited number of outrages, yet the *Baltimore Sun* said, "It was the quietest election day in years." The awls got in their very effective work, and were supplemented by cowhage which was sprinkled at the polls. In the ninth ward the reform candidate to the first branch withdrew at noon. The subsequent count showed that his opponent was but sixteen ahead. In the twentieth ward while the count was proceeding the Plug Uglies charged the polls and suc-



ceeded in destroying the ballot box. Up to that time the reform candidate was one hundred and twenty in the majority. The twentieth ward was left undecided. The total vote in nineteen wards was Know-Nothings 9,031, Reformers 7,706, six Reform candidates being elected and thirteen Know-Nothings.

Before the state and national elections took place another reform mass meeting was held. Shortly after there was a Know-Nothing parade and mass meeting, both marked by brawls and violence. Intimidating transparencies were carried in this procession. Clifton W. Tayleure, in February 1860, testifying in one of the Contested Election Cases, said:

"Some were very humorous, others witty, and others ridiculous. Some were of a very significant character. \* \* There were figures of men pursued by others with awls in their hands; others of bleeding heads, some with very ridiculous faces labelled and inscribed, 'heads of reformers.' One witty one, read something like this:

'Reform measures, reform man  
If you can vote I'll be damned.'

The general nature of these devices was to encourage voters to come up, intimating, of course that it would be 'all right,'"

the picture of an awl being generally substituted for the word. The Rattlers, one of the Know-Nothing clubs, inserted in the newspapers a notice that the awls would be ready for distribution. Henry Winter Davis, brilliant leader that he was of the Baltimore Bar, candidate for Congress from the fourth congressional district, delivered a most violent and inflammatory address during this campaign. Anthony Kennedy, well-known locally, also spoke in the same strain.

The ensuing election was the most lawless and riotous that Baltimore had ever experienced. Knowing itself on the run, the lawless element girded itself for a final effort. The arrangements made by the mayor for the municipal election were not carried out. In the fifteenth ward the polls were held in the Watchmen's Engine-house (near Lee Street). From the upper windows of this fire-house shots were fired. Two reformers by

the name of Kyle, attacked by the mob, were shot at and one killed. The evidence brought out in the subsequent contested congressional election case proved conclusively that the polls were everywhere located conveniently near saloons, "coops," Know-Nothing club-houses and similar establishments, all of them well provided with fire-arms. As in previous elections, cannon were seen on the streets, close to the polls. On the morning of the election the *Clipper* and the *Patriot*, both Know-Nothing organs, came out full of countercharges and seditious editorials, intended to intimidate the average man and sufficient for the purpose. At one of the polls, the judge for the reform party was forced out, and a Know-Nothing who had usurped the place, constituted himself election judge. In the charges brought in 1857 by Brooks contesting the legality of Henry Winter Davis' election, it was urged that even women voted. In the election of 1859 "woman suffrage" was tried out on a large scale and minors also voted. It was useless for the opposition to attempt to vote; and of course equally useless for challengers to remain at the polls. As long as they closed their eyes all might go well, but one objection and they were hustled out, or arrested, charged with creating a disturbance. Accordingly by two in the afternoon they had abandoned the polls in every ward but the eighth. Knowing that their power was waning, for this election the Know-Nothings imported a number of roughs. The home market could not furnish the necessary quota. Washington was the recruiting ground. The authorities there were notified, and police were accordingly posted at the depot, to intercept and search all suspects on their return, but the rowdies had "gotten wind" of this and most of them left the train at the cut near Bladensburg.

The "coops" which were a terror at this election were worked to capacity. The evidence of one eye-witness may be sufficient to show what the methods were, but cannot describe the horrors of the "coop." Severn Teackle Wallis, in his testimony, November 1859, said:

"By degrees a few more persons came up to vote, when I saw Erasmus Levy, take his station by the door of his house, from which there came out a party of men headed by one of the persons who had been engaged in



the previous rioting and firing; the party was composed of a wretched set of creatures, filthy, stupefied with drink, some of them in sailor's clothes, some of them without shirts, one I observed without any shoes, some without hats; they were marched up to the polls in charge of the man I have referred to, in Indian file, where they voted as rapidly as Mr. Hinesley, the chief judge, could take their tickets; the man who had them in charge cried out 'clear the way, make room for the voters' and pushed everybody else aside; as the party voted and I suppose there were some twenty or thirty of them at least, they marched back into Levy's house and out again, then voted again then back to Levy's house, then out again and voted, then back and out again and voted. I suppose I saw the process repeated from six to a dozen times \* \* something after the fashion of the endless chain of the mathematicians. They were then hustled into an omnibus and driven away."

and John Shaney the president of the "Regulator" club, was seen wrapping himself with devout patriotism in an American flag, and hurrahing from the top of the bus. Previous to the election "Ras" Levy stopped Wallis on the street, told him of the uselessness of reform efforts, urged him to take care of himself and announced that the clubs must carry the next election, by violence and fraud if need be.

"Why, Mr. Wallis, suppose you Reformers get this damned place (pointing over his left shoulder to the Criminal Court) don't I know I am a goner, don't we all know we are goners \* \* \* don't I know if you elect your prosecuting attorney and sheriff I can't stay in town for a week, that none of us can?"

It is hardly necessary to give the result of the election, if election it could truly be called. Harris was sent to Congress from the third district by a vote of 8,026 to Preston's 2,554. In the fourth district the vote stood Davis 8,250 to 2,637 of Harrison. Purnell was elected comptroller. In Baltimore County his vote was 18,611 to Jarets 5,334, while in the city of Baltimore the Know-Nothings carried everything before them. In the State, their power, which had been gradually slipping, was now destroy-

ed. The Legislature that was elected, consisted in Senate twelve Democrats to ten Know-Nothings; House, forty-eight Democrats to twenty-eight Know-Nothings. The hopes of the reformers were raised. They could expect something of such a legislature. The people of Baltimore had grown weary of mob rule, felt the necessity of some stand upon the slavery question, and had become impatient with the dilatory issues of Know-Nothingism. Time and again Henry Winter Davis was denounced as an abolitionist, but the voice of Baltimore had been stifled by the clubs that held her in their clutches. The reform organization was not slow to grasp the situation. At the meeting of the seventeenth of November a committee was appointed to present to the legislature evidence of frauds perpetrated at the previous elections. To another committee was given the duty of drafting measures designed to cure the evils from which the city was suffering.

In the meantime the two defeated congressional candidates had given Messrs. Harris and Davis notice of their intention to contest the election. The testimony taken comprises several large volumes. The effort was futile. Additional evidence was presented in 1860 in the shape of memorial petitions by Joshua Vansant. They were signed by 8,347 persons legally qualified to vote, present in the city at the time of the election. Of these 2,581 voted and 5,766 did not. Of the latter 1,153 asserted that they were actually subjected to violence, 3,788 that they were intimidated, the rest assigning no reason. Of those who voted, over one half resided in the eighth, eleventh and twelfth wards. Those who had gotten up the memorial said:

If a proper effort had been made at least double the number of names might have been obtained."

In his message to the council, January 1860, Swann alluded to the election riots in the phrases of a pharisee. If men commit outrages, if frauds are perpetrated at the polls, if people are crowded out, he protested, why blame the mayor? The whole trouble lies in the lack of efficient laws. Laws should be enacted against the carrying of concealed weapons. Stricter ones were wanted against intoxication and public houses. Thus did he try in modern parlance "to pass the buck." The legislature was not



alone willing to enact the stricter laws, but even to remedy what had occurred in the absence of such laws. By resolution the election of Purnell, state comptroller, was made void, and A. Lingon Jarrett was declared elected in his stead. By a similar resolution the Know-Nothing clerk of the circuit court was displaced and a new election ordered. On the last day of the session the house of delegates resolved to void the election of November 2nd, 1859, of the representatives of Baltimore city, and accordingly Messrs. Krafft, Booze, Seth, Berry, Crowley, McAllister, Smith, Turner and Denison were expelled from the house. Wisong who had succeeded at that election had the courage to declare the election a fraud and to refuse to sit. The expelled members suffered the humiliation of being present during the debate and passage of the reform measure which preceded their expulsion. The committee on legislation consisted of Norris, Thomas, Steele, Wallis, Poe, McMahon, Nelson, Gill, Campbell, Brown, Spence, Gwinn and Reverdy Johnson. Their work lasted six weeks uninterruptedly and resulted in the police, jury and election statutes, which remained substantially the law for the next forty years.

The police organization created during Swann's administration was under a marshal, responsible to the mayor. The city was divided into districts each containing a station-house, these districts being subdivided into "beats." An adequate complement of captains, lieutenants and other officers was created by the ordinance of January 1857. The police law enacted by the legislature was to some extent modeled upon the ordinance in force. The city was districted in the same way, but instead of a marshal of police responsible to the mayor there was created a police board of four together with the mayor *ex-officio*. The members of this board were appointed by the legislature. All the appointees on the force had to be residents of the city, persons of good character, of physical strength and courage, with a knowledge of reading and writing and such was the pro-slavery feeling, neither a "black republican" nor endorser of the "Helper Book." A force of between 350 and 450 was provided for, with special police in case of emergencies. The sheriff was required to obey all calls and orders of the Board. The Board was empowered to call out the militia in its discretion. To attempt to

maintain the old police, or to resist the new force was made punishable with a fine of one thousand dollars for each offense. To make it entirely independent of the executive, the Board was to draw up its own estimate which the mayor and city council were obliged to provide by assessing and levying the necessary taxes. The journal of the proceedings of the board together with its accounts was required to be public. The election of justices of the peace, ward magistrates and constables was done away with, and their appointment placed in the hands of the Board. As soon as this law was passed Swann sent a message to the council volunteering an opinion of its unconstitutionality, and asking leave to test it, for which the council voted \$5,000.

The first board consisting of Charles Howard, William H. Gatchell, Charles D. Hinks and John W. Davis, took oath in the office of the clerk of the superior court on the sixth of February. On the ninth through their counsel Reverdy Johnson, Severn Teackle Wallis, J. Mason Campbell and William H. Norris, they demanded the surrender of the station-houses and police equipment and upon Swann's prompt refusal a mandamus was applied for to compel the city authorities to comply. From Judge Martin's decision declaring the Board constitutional, an appeal was taken but the decision below was affirmed. The old force was disbanded, and the new one entered upon its duties with the first of May.

In passing it must be mentioned that the old volunteer fire companies had been abolished by an ordinance passed September 1858, and a paid department established. A marked decrease in the number of fires especially those due to incendiarism was noticeable the ensuing year, but the companies still assisted the clubs in their riotous demonstrations. During the same year the police and fire alarm telegraph system was introduced with good results.

The jury law passed at this session created a panel of seven hundred and fifty qualified persons from a list of taxable males furnished by the collector of taxes to be drawn annually before the May term by the judges of the four city courts. Out of these seven hundred and fifty the first twenty-three names were to constitute the Grand Jury of the criminal court, the next twenty-five the jurors of the superior court; the next twenty-five, of the



common pleas; the next of the criminal. All were to be entered on the jury books. In cases where "*tales de circumstantibus*" are ordered, the sheriff was required to select from those entered in the book but not on the regular panel, and on this list becoming exhausted recourse was to be had to the other books. Next to the police law the election law was the most important. It divided the wards into polling precincts of about four hundred and fifty voters each. Every voter was required to deposit his ballot in the precinct of his residence. The board of police was given the appointment of three judges of election and two clerks for every precinct. These, required to be residents of the ward, were empowered to preserve the peace while on duty, to keep the polls clear for ingress or egress, to prevent intimidation and to commit persons who violated the law. They could summon under penalty for refusal, the police, the sheriff, his deputies or any citizens to assist in maintaining the law. They were authorized to choose the polling places which, however, had always to be near the center of the precinct, on a public street, convenient and accessible and not near a saloon or public house. They were permitted to erect barriers around the polls to prevent obstruction. The polls had to be advertised in the papers ten days in advance of the election and remain open from 8 A. M. to 5 P. M. Rejected ballots had to be separately deposited in sealed envelopes endorsed with the voter's name in a box provided for the purpose and unless called for by a judicial investigation before twelve months, burnt unopened. Saloons were compelled to close on election day. Judges were required under penalty to exercise the power of preserving the peace and enjoined from knowingly or willingly refusing to receive a legal, or accepting an illegal, vote. Conspiracy to intimidate voters and intimidation, conspiracy to obstruct the polls and obstruction, mutilation of ballots, stealing of records and kindred acts were made criminal. The police on suspicion of fire-arms in or near the polls, were authorized and required without any order, warrant or permit, to cause a search to be made and the weapons found, taken into custody until the day after the returns had been made known. Judges of election had to take the oath before serving and thereafter were required under penalty to serve. Immediately after each election they were obliged to appear before the grand jury

as witnesses and give information unless prepared to make affidavit that the proceedings of the day were orderly.

The passage of these laws rudimentary, as they seem to-day in the light of the great advances made since, sounded the knell of the Know-Nothing clubs. They were disbanded and the leading roughs fled. What was once the Know-Nothing party acted for a year with the new American or the "Constitutional Union" party which met in Baltimore in 1860 to nominate John Bell and Edward Everett. Its convention has been described as a quiet "family reunion and all there." In 1863 the Know-Nothing party joined the "Unconditional Union" party in Maryland, after which the transition into the Republican party was easy.

To return to the year 1860: for the approaching municipal election a complete ticket was nominated with George William Brown, who had done most to inaugurate the era of reform, as candidate for the mayoralty. The spirit of reform had long ago been aroused, but could not make itself felt at the polls until adequate laws were there to sustain it. The public saw that the reform association was more than an assemblage of sour partisans concealing their own ambitions under the mask of reform. The election that took place was without disturbance. It was really the most peaceful election ever held in Baltimore. The entire reform ticket was elected. Judge Brown received 17,625 votes to 9,864 of Mr. Hinds, the Know-Nothing nominee. The "reign of terror" from which the city of Baltimore had suffered since 1854 was at an end.

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